

## SPIDER FARM.

## A QUEER INDUSTRY IN PENN. SYLVANIA.

An Old Frenchman Sells the Spiders to Wine Merchants—Making New Bottles Look Like Old.

There is but one spider farm in the United States. As far as a writer for the Philadelphia Press can learn there are only two in the world. One has only to go four miles from Philadelphia on the old Lancaster pike and ask for the farm of Pierre Grantaire to see what can be found nowhere else in this country, and abroad only in a little French village in the department of the Loire.

Pierre Grantaire furnishes spiders at so much per hundred for distribution in the wine vaults of the merchant and the nouveau riche. His trade is chiefly with the wholesale merchant, who is able to stock a cellar with new, shining, freshly labelled bottles, and in three months see them veiled in filmy cobwebs, so that the effect of twenty years of storage is secured at a small cost.

The Lancaster pike is an old, old highway that trembled to the tramp of marching columns in the Revolution. In one of the low, stone farmhouses, huge as to chimney, lives Pierre Grantaire, a veteran of the French army, who was conscripted as a middle aged man from his father's farm in '70 to fight the Prussians. For ten years he has lived here, a rather unique figure among the matter of fact farmers around him.

Old Grantaire has a wonderful vegetable farm, and sends in the choicest "green stuff" that is displayed in the Philadelphia markets. His neighbors know that he is a market gardener, and also raises mushrooms, and rather envy him the returns from his squabs, that retail at sixty cents a pair this time of year. But few of them know of the spider raising industry, which makes a substantial part of Pierre's business. It is not to the old man's interest to have this advertised, and he seldom takes a caller into the two rooms of his dwelling where his multi-legged pets cover the walls and weave their gossamer patterns everywhere.

It was a bit shuddering for the visitor, who had been brought up to smash a spider with a slipper or whatever came handiest, to be brought into a room where there were spiders in front of him, spiders to the rear of him, myriads of spiders on every hand.

The walls were covered by wire squares from six inches to a foot across, like magnified sections of the wire fence used to enclose poultry yards. Behind these wire screens the walls had been covered with rough planking. There were cracks between the boards, apparently left with design, and their weather beaten surfaces were dotted with knotholes and splintered crevices. Long tables running the length of the room were covered with small wire frames, wooden boxes and glass jars. All of these wires in the room were covered over by patterns of lace tracery, in the geometrical outlines fashioned by the spider artists, inspired by the mysterious instinct which has made them weave their filmy snares in the same fashion since the world began.

The sunlight streamed through the open door and the room seemed hung with curtains of elfin woven lace-work. The king of the fairy palaces rapped his stubby pipe against the door, and the webs were dotted with black spots as the spiders scampered from their retreats in the wall cracks and a score of villainous looking pets as big as half dollars emerged from their crannies on the table and clustered against their glass roofing.

"They think I feed them now," said Pierre, "but I fool them for you. They have brains, these little creatures. Ah, they are cunning! After you see them and I tell you of them, you will never crush them more, you will say, 'The spider can teach me something. I will watch him. He is a diplomat, an architect, a mathematician. His knowledge is worth having. Don't knock him off. He will not bite you. They are harmless. He wishes to make your acquaintance.'"

"You wish to know of the business first? That is like you people—money first, then the sentiment. There are 2,000 spiders in this room, all raising families and minding their own business. Is not that a teaching to the world and a lesson already? You see, in these frames I breed my pets, and when the infants are big enough to run about I take them into the next room, where they can set up for themselves, as you say. It is from there I sell most. They are great cannibals, my pets; they eat their children and the children each other. So I must get a good price for those that survive their childhood."

"It is not all kinds of spiders that make webs. There are those that live in holes in the ground, and make for themselves trap doors, and some make soft nests in cracks, while others spin small homes in the grass or in the room corners. No, indeed; I have sought out kinds that weave themselves fine large webs of laces and circles. They only look artistic in the wine cellar or on the bottle. They are the selected ones."

"A customer comes to me. He is a wine merchant from New York or Philadelphia, or perhaps he writes. He says that he has just stocked a cellar with five-year-old port or Burgundy, or something else. The bottles have been brushed clean in shipping. They look new and common. They will not sell for old wine. He has attached to them labels of twenty, thirty or forty years ago, some of a grand vintage. He tells me so many hundred bottles. I know how many of my pets will soon cover his cellar in cobwebs of the finest old kind. I put them in little small paper boxes, a pair in a box. I ship them in a crate, with many holes for air. Maybe I send two, three, four hundred spiders. For them I ask half a franc each, \$10 for every hundred. In two months you would think this cellar was not disturbed for the last fifty years. It has cost him \$40 or \$50 maybe, but he may sell the wine for \$1,000—yes, more than that—above what they had

brought without my pets had dressed the bottles in the robes of long ago."

## JOHNSON'S INAUGURATION.

The Vice President Was Not Sober When He Took the Oath.

Noah Brooks tells the following story in his personal reminiscences of Lincoln in the Century:

All eyes were turned to the main entrance, where, precisely on the stroke of 12, appeared Andrew Johnson, Vice President elect, arm in arm with Hannibal Hamlin, whose term of office was now expiring. They took seats together on the dais of the presiding officer, and Hamlin made a brief and sensible speech, and Andrew Johnson, whose face was extraordinarily red, was presented to take the oath. It is needless to say here that the unfortunate gentleman, who had been very ill, was not altogether sober at this most important moment of his life. In order to strengthen himself for the physical and mental ordeal through which he was about to pass he had taken a stiff drink of whisky in the room of the Vice President, and the warmth of the Senate chamber, together with other physical conditions, had sent the fiery liquor to his brain. He was evidently intoxicated.

As he went on with his speech, he turned upon the cabinet officers and addressed them as "Mr. Stanton," "Mr. Seward," etc., without the official handles to their names. Forgetting Mr. Welles' name, he said, "and you, too, Mr.,"—then leaning over to Col. Forney, he said, "What is the name of the Secretary of the Navy?" and then continued as though nothing had happened. Once in a while, from the reporter's gallery, I could observe Hamlin nudging Johnson from behind, reminding him that the hour for the inauguration ceremony had passed. The speaker kept on, although President Lincoln sat before him, patiently waiting for his extraordinary harangue to be over.

The study of the faces below was interesting. Seward was as bland and serene as a summer day; Stanton appeared to be petrified; Welles' face was usually void of any expression; Speed sat with his eyes closed; Dennison was red and white by turns. Among the Union Senators Henry Wilson's face was flushed; Sumner wore a saturnine and sarcastic smile; and most of the others turned and twisted in their senatorial chairs as if in long drawn agony. Of the Supreme Bench, Judge Nelson only was apparently moved, his lower jaw being dropped clean down in blank horror. Chase was marble, adamant, granite in immobility until Johnson turned his back upon the Senate to take the oath, when he exchanged glances with Nelson, who then closed up his mouth.

When Johnson had repeated inaudibly the oath of office, his hand upon the book, he turned and took the Bible in his hand, and facing the audience, said with a loud, theatrical voice and gesture, "I kiss this book in the face of my nation of the United States."

## Wanted to Die Rich.

Many years ago, according to one of the yarns of the sea told by mariners who claimed to have been present, a little British ship having on board a large consignment of Spanish dollars for a house in Rio Janeiro was wrecked on the Brazilian coast. Hoping to save some of his precious cargo the Captain ordered one of the casks containing the gold brought on deck, but the vessel was so badly wrecked by the continuous pounding on the rocks that it was soon found necessary to take to the boats without any of the treasure. As the last boat was about to leave the ill-fated craft, one of the officers to make sure that no one was left on board, went back to make a last tour of the ship. To his surprise, sitting beside one of the casks with a hatchet in his hand, he found one of the sailors.

"Hurry up!" cried the officer. "We came within an ace of going off without you."

"I'm not going," replied the sailor, giving the cask a hearty whack with the hatchet, bursting it open, and laughing with delight as the coin poured out around him. "I've always wanted to die rich. I've been poor all my life, and this is my first and last chance. Go ahead, I'll stay here with my fortune."

## Nickel Steel Frames.

The construction of the yacht Valkyrie III, is at last definitely known. She is of composite build, with keel, stem, sternpost and deadwoods of teak; frames, stringers and ties of nickel steel and wood planking. The keel was cast about March 4; the wood keel has been bolted to the lead, and the stem and sternpost set up, the frames riveted and set up, and the ribbands run. In model the new boat is similar to Britannia and Valkyrie, a keel cutter, but with her leading features carried to a greater extreme.

The original report that she was to be plated with nickel steel was doubted at the time, and now the wisdom of the doubt is shown. Nickel steel has greater tensile strength than plain steel, and therefore allows the use of a smaller and lighter frame.

Alisa's frames are also of nickel steel, and it would not be at all surprising to find that the frames of the new Herreshoff cup defender are of the same material. Exact information on the latter point is not obtainable, but the cup defender's frames are certainly very light in color for plain steel, and come much nearer nickel steel in looks.

## Lonely Mont Blanc.

The highest peak in Europe, Mont Blanc, has been ascended thirty-nine times in 1894. Fifty-eight persons reached the summit. Among them were eighteen French, fourteen Americans, fourteen English, eight Germans, two Russians, one Austri-

an, and one Swiss. Three ladies braved the cold, the hardships and difficulties, so as to be numbered among the successful tourists. The last ascension in 1894 was made on November 4 by Guide Payot and three carriers, who carried up the scientific instruments for the observatory on the summit. They remained at the building three days to arrange everything in the rooms that are to be turned over to public use next summer.

## RODE A DEER.

Perilous Adventure of a Hunter in Florida.

James L. Harn, of Fort Myers, Fla., took a Macepalike ride on the neck of a deer that came near costing him his life.

Mr. Harn and Dr. T. E. Langford were out hunting, when they saw a fine buck quietly feeding half a mile away. It was agreed that Harn should stalk the deer, while Langford remained with the horses.

Accordingly Harn dismounted and began to approach the deer, which, in the meantime, had moved so that it was no longer visible.

After half an hour Langford heard a shot and supposed Harn had killed the deer. A few minutes later he heard a cry for help, and immediately after saw the deer come tearing through the brush with Harn clinging to its neck.

At every bound Harn was being terribly lacerated by the sharp hoofs of the deer and the brush. The direction in which the deer was moving would cause it to pass within fifty yards of Langford, and the latter resolved to attempt to shoot the animal as it came by.

The doctor realized that the bullet might hit Harn, but felt it was the only chance to save his friend's life. Accordingly, as the buck with its human burden came bounding past Langford took careful aim and fired. The shot was successful, and with the next bound the deer fell dead.

Langford hastened to Harn's aid, and found him in a terribly lacerated condition. His clothing had been torn from him and his skin cut to shreds by either the hoofs of the deer or the brush. While suffering much agony from his injuries, Harn will recover.

Harn when he fired the deer fell, and supposing the animal dead he approached to cut its throat. As he reached the buck it sprang to its feet and darted at him. Harn instinctively threw his arms about the deer's neck and then came the ride through the brush. Harn was afraid to let go, lest the buck should paw him to death.

Dr. Langford's shot was a lucky one, the bullet entering just behind the shoulder of the deer.

## Wood Pulp.

More than 50 per cent. of the saw mill owners to-day would make more money to sell their logs to be manufactured into wood pulp and paper than they can possibly expect to secure through sales of the same in the form of manufactured lumber. The wood pulp industry has far outstripped the manufactured lumber industry.

One factor in the pulp and paper business is not always recognized by the owners of spruce forests. When a pulp mill grinds up a million feet of logs into paper product, and the same is sold to the great newspaper corporations and printed upon day after day, that paper practically goes out of existence. Few think of saving a newspaper. The individual newspaper reader throws his paper, after reading, into the waste basket or kindles a pipe with it. It becomes the property of the old junk dealer, and practically passes out of existence. On the other hand the piece of lumber which is manufactured goes into a substantial building, which lasts for generations. So that the great consumption of spruce for pulp and paper really amounts to so much raw material taken out of the market forever, and practically wasted, so far as any subsequent use to which it may be applied is concerned.—Manufacturers' Gazette.

## The Use of the Hump.

There are some men in this world who can answer any question that is put to them, and sometimes when they do not really know what they are talking about they will give answers that are not at all bad. One of these persons was once a keeper of the London Zoo. He was pestered to death by the questions which people asked, but he always gave an answer. On a recent occasion a countryman strolled in, and after looking curiously at the camel for a few moments he turned to the keeper and said:

"I say, mister, what's he have a hump for?"

"What does he have a hump for?" repeated the keeper.

"Yes, What's the good of it?" asked the visitor.

"Why—it makes a camel of him, of course," replied the keeper, after some hesitation. "People wouldn't travel miles to see him if he didn't have that hump. Fact is, without it he might as well be a cow."

The stranger departed very well satisfied.

## A Study in Grammar.

A teacher in one of the lower grades of a city school was endeavoring to impress upon her pupils the fact that a plural subject takes a verb in the plural.

"Remember this," she said, "girls are, boys are; a girl is, a boy is. Now, do you understand it?"

Every hand in the room was raised in assent.

"Well, then," continued the teacher, "who can give me a sentence with girls—plural, remember?"

This time only one hand was raised, and that belonged to a pretty little miss. "Please, ma'am," she said, with all the assurance of a primitive reasoning, "I can give a sentence. 'Girls are my hat on straight!'"

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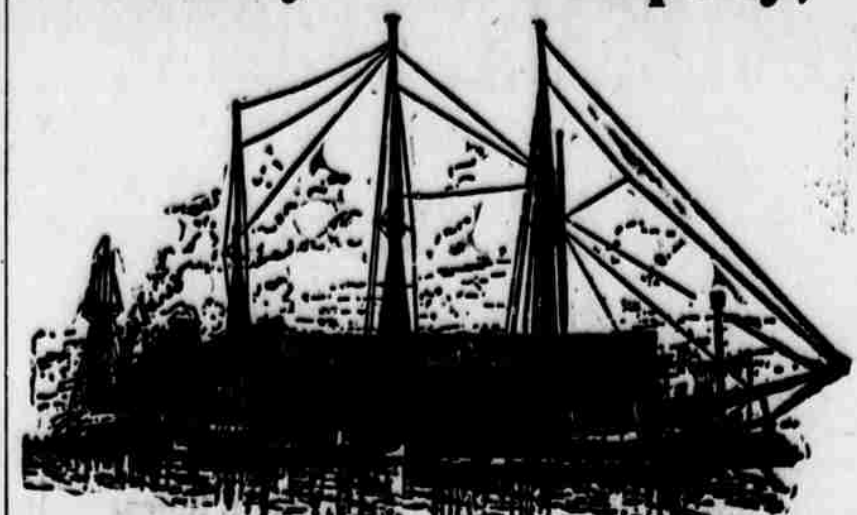
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